YOUNG DAYS.

FORBIDDEN PLEASURES (see page 20.)

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JOEY AND LOUIE, OR THE FAIRY'S GIFT.

BY E. A. GIBBS.

CHAPTER III.

THE MAGIC OF THE MOONLIGHT.

"JOEY, dear! Joey! are you awake—it's time to get up!"

For a moment Joey, startled in his dreams, sat up and rubbed his eyes, then with a grunt turned over and buried his face in the pillow. He knew what the summons meant, for he had caught a glimpse of the same little figure, that had troubled his eyes last thing before he fell asleep, sitting bolt upright in the little white bed under the window.

Now, Joey felt half drunk with sleep, and more disinclined than before for the adventurous expedition, so determining to defer the evil moment as long as possible, he turned on his side and pretended to snore lustily.

It was evident, however, that Louie was not to be so easily daunted . . . . . after a few moments' silence, there was an ominous rustling, then a patter of bare little feet across the floor, and Joey felt two plump little hands pounding away at his recumbent form.

"Oh Joey, dear, do wake! don't be cross, I do so want to find the fairies, and you *promised* you'd take me if I kept awake, and it was *so* hard! Joey, dear, do!" said a little voice close to his ear, in tones of such thrilling eagerness, that Joey felt himself vanquished.

"Well, there! don't go making a fuss! What a worry you girls are to be sure! I sp'ose if I must, I must! but you need not go making a row, and waking up Nurse, I 'spec's you've done it already!"

"Oh no, it's all right, she's snoring beautifully, just hark;" said Louie, holding up her hand to impose silence.

Now, the door leading into the adjoining night-nursery had been left ajar, and there was no mistaking the deep sonorous sounds, something between the grunting of a pig and the snorting of an engine, which quivered through the room and told that their watchful guardian was without doubt, enjoying her well-earned repose, and not likely to be easily disturbed.

"Very well then, get off my bed, if you want me to get up; and dress yourself as sharp as you can, 'cos *I* shan't take long, and I shan't wait, if you're not ready, so there!" said Joey, sullenly, rousing himself with an effort, and sitting up in bed to pull on his stockings, whilst Louie, alarmed at his threat, scuttled off to the other side of the room to commence operations.

And now a strange thing happened. No sooner had Joey opened his eyes, and gazed a moment at the flood of silver moonlight that streamed in across the room, just at the foot of his bed, than all his reluctance vanished, and he felt even more eager than Louie to be off as quickly as possible. Strangely enough, too, it seemed as if his clothes were possessed by the same desire, for they slipped themselves on to him immediately he touched them, and were fastened as if by magic. A refreshing douche from the sponge, and a pass of the brush across his hair, and there he was spic, span, and ready to make a start, whilst poor Louie was still struggling with refractory buttons and strings, only, in fact, at the very commencement of her toilette.

"Oh! Joey, don't go! please help me! I can't get fastened, and the strings have all been and twisted themselves into knots!" she said, almost crying for vexation, as she pattered across the room and stopped in front of Joey, her pretty bare shoulders shining like marble in the moonlight, as she looked up at him with wet imploring eyes.

"Bless me! you *have* made a jumble! I should have thought at your age you might have managed better than that! Here, give me your frock! I'd best finish you off whilst I am about it, for I can't wait no longer!" said Joey, grandly, though rather surprised to find how easily the knots disentangled at his touch, whilst the hooks and eyes of the pretty pink gingham, which Louie held out towards him, seemed to fasten of themselves, as he slipped the frock over her head.

That it was turned wrong side out, was in Joey's opinion a mere matter of detail, and though Louie was rather distressed in her mind when she discovered the mistake, she saw it was useless to remonstrate, for her brother was evidently in a fever to be off and not inclined to brook any delay. Seeing him make for the door, Louie snatched down her little sunbonnet, and was hastening to follow him, when she put her foot on a ball that the baby had left on the floor, slipped, and clutching at the nearest object, the water-jug, fell her full length on the floor.

For a moment, Joey paused aghast, his gaze riveted on the night-nursery door, through which he expected to see the angry form of the roused sleeper come to take vengeance on the

disturber of her repose, for at the startling crash the snoring had suddenly ceased, and there was an ominous creaking of Nurse's bedstead, which seemed to portend her arrival. Now, Joey had no mind to be captured, so turning, he slipped through the half open door, and fled silently and swiftly downstairs, as though possessed by the furies, leaving poor Louie, lying prone in a pool of water.

His one desire was to get out into the open air, and he was surprised to find how easily he accomplished the task, which he had thought might be somewhat difficult.

There was never much done in the way of locking up at the Cottage, and shutters were quite unheard of in the quite little village, where thieves and robbers were unknown ; still Joey had feared some trouble from the latch of the morning-room window, for it always went rather stiffly, and he could only reach it by standing on a stool. Fortunately, however, the blind had been left up, so that the room was fairly light, and no sooner did his fingers touch the latch than it moved back, the window opened as if by some invisible power, and he found himself standing on the lawn, transfixed with admiration at the magical beauty of the scene.

The sky was of a dark blue, softened here and there by fleecy clouds, which seemed to hang like a veil, mid-way between earth and heaven, the air was soft and balmy, and there was a solemnity in the deep hush of nature, which impressed the boy and raised his expectations to the highest pitch. Suddenly a gentle rustling in the bushes caused him to start and take a few steps forward, whilst a look of expectancy came into his eyes. Had a "troupe of fairies" come dancing across the lawn at that moment to meet him, he would not have been surprised, but there was only a rush and scramble, then a sound suspiciously like the angry growl of a cat. Then again all was silence.

Slowly, and on tip toe, the boy made his way across the lawn, and had just put his finger on the latch of the little wicket-gate to undo it, when he heard his name called in a plaintive whisper, and turning, became aware of Louie's fat, prosaic, little figure, as she stood at the open window, peering out into the moonlight. There was a distressed look on her usually round, smiling face, and her little pink frock hung very limp and damp; altogether she looked such a deplorably unkempt, commonplace, and plump little mortal, that Joey for a moment hesitated as to whether he should not slip off without her. It was evident she could not see him where he stood in the shadow. If he took her she would be sure to lag by the way and hinder him, perhaps get him into difficulties ; still, there was something so pathetic in the appealing "Oh Joey, dear, where are you ? you have not gone and left me !" that Joey felt he could not play so mean a trick, and quickly stepping back into the moonlight, was rewarded by the joyous change in the child's voice and attitude, as suddenly aware of his presence she darted towards him and clung round him, almost crying for joy.

"There, don't make such a to-do. What duffers you girls are. I thought you'd muff it somehow ! If you aren't quick we shall be too late," he said gruffly, as opening the gate, he took her hand in his, and drew her out into the lane, where the shadows from the overhanging trees lay very darkly.

For awhile the two crept silently along under the hedge, awed by the solitude around and starting at the echo of their own footsteps.

There was something so weird and ghostly in the absolute stillness of the night, that the boy felt his courage and eagerness were oozing fast away. He was glad now he had brought his little sister with him, for although she was strangely silent, and her presence could not in any case afford much protection from the unseen dangers which seemed hovering in the air, yet there was a feeling of companionship in the clasp of her warm little hand, and comfort in the knowledge that he would not be quite alone in the case of any emergency. At last, having breasted the hill, and reached the entrance to the wood, they paused for an instant to take breath and try to find their bearings, but alas ! there was such a labyrinth of paths, stretching in all directions, that the boy felt utterly bewildered. Even in broad daylight it required some knowledge and skill to steer for a given point. As it was, he felt the task was hopeless ; and he was just opening his lips to propose they should "beat a retreat," when Louie darted from his side, and stooping down, picked something up in her hand.

"Look, Joey, how it sparkles. I thought it was a diamond !" she said, joyously, turning, and affording the boy a momentary glimpse of some sparkling object, lying embedded in her small, fat palm. "Hark ! I can hear music," she continued, holding up her hand, and pausing in an attitude of listening, whilst her face fairly shone with delight.

"Nonsense, it's only the wind in the trees ! I don't like the sound, I think there's a storm coming and we'd best turn back !" said Joey, uneasily, shivering with apprehension, as sud-

denly a black cloud swept across the face of the moon, and left them stumbling along in the darkness.

"Oh no! no! we're nearly there now! Look! I can see lights dancing in the distance. It *is* the fairies' glen! Oh! Joey, come, come quickly!" cried Louie, in strangely exulting tones, hurrying forward into the darkness.

"Lights? Where? I don't see any, you're dreaming. It's as dark as pitch! Look here, Louie, I wish you wouldn't play the fool!" said Joey, gruffly, more than half alarmed at the strange transformation which had taken place in his little sister, as no longer timid, faltering, and looking to him for support, her feet seemed to fly along the intricate pathways so swiftly, that it was as much as he could do to keep up with her.

"Had Louie gone mad, or fallen under some spell of enchantment? or was it that *he* had become deaf and blind . . . since she could see and hear things of which he had no perception!" . . . . puzzling over this problem, Joey turned for a moment to look back . . . . and in that moment Louie was lost to view! Running wildly forward in the hope to catch her up, the boy suddenly came into contact with some solid substance . . . . and was thrown heavily to the ground . . . . where he lay dazed and almost unconscious.

CHAPTER IV.

JOEY CAPTURES AN ELF.

When Joey was sufficiently recovered to sit up and begin to look about him, he discovered to his amaze that immediately in front of him rose a high stone wall, whilst all around and above were dark masses of trees, which every moment seemed to grow thicker and thicker, and to close in nearer and nearer, until he felt he should soon be stifled, and looked vainly round for some possible means of escape.

"Louie! Louie! where are you?" he cried in piercing tones, but alas, no answering sound came to reassure him, only the mocking echo of his own voice—"are you," "are you," it said. Starting up, he ran a few yards, now this way, now that, but in every direction was met by obstacles, and found himself at last in a maze, to which there was no opening.

Oppressed by the silence, Joey shouted again, for the sake of hearing his own voice, then, as the mocking echo alone replied, cast himself on the ground and gave way to despair.

He would certainly starve to death in the wood, even if no worse fate overtook him, and what had become of Louie he could not even conjecture; but there was little chance he would ever find her again in such a wilderness! Suddenly a bright thought struck him! "She had been carried away by the fairies!" They were evidently on enchanted ground, and if, as was probable, the shining morsel she had pounced upon so eagerly was an elf in disguise, that would account for her transformation and sudden disappearance. If *he* could only make a like capture, he would be able to get away from his present uncomfortable position! At any rate it was worth a trial. Inspired by hope Joey rose, and wiping his eyes that he might see more clearly, began crawling along on hands and knees, peering diligently into every nook and corner, lifting heavy mossy stones, putting back leaves and brambles, regardless of thorns and nettles, which scratched and stung him, as though to punish him for his intrusion. Slipping and sliding on the damp mossy ground, his sailor-jumper almost torn from his back, his trousers caked with slime and mud, yet still he persevered in his search, until, at length, just as, feeling utterly beaten and exhausted, he was about again to give way to despair, he espied something glittering under the shadow of the hedge. With a cry of joy he pounced on it, and picked up what appeared to be, a tiny glow-worm, to which he held very tightly, in spite of the little creature's frantic struggles to free itself from his grasp.

"Let me go, little Master! You will kill me if you hold me so tightly, and I promise to be your slave and do your will if you will grant me my freedom!" said a low, soft voice, which seemed to come out of the very depths of the earth. Startled for a moment, Joey hesitated, then recalling the tales he had heard of the wiles and tricks of the elfin nature, he determined to keep a firm hold of his captive.

"No! no! you must *earn* your freedom before I grant it! I have had trouble enough to find you, and now I *have* you I intend to keep you. Obey me! and then perhaps later I may reward your services by letting you go free!" said Joey, with a lordly air, greatly elated by his good luck, as, looking down, he found his glow-worm had suddenly become transformed into a tiny, but very perfectly formed, brown elf-like creature, wearing on its head a pointed scarlet cap, and bearing in one hand a spear, in the other a small but very brilliant lamp, from which flashed many-coloured rays of almost blinding light.

"Speak, Master! what will you? I live but

to obey !" replied the elf, in tones of deep submission, ceasing its struggles for freedom and resigning itself to the inevitable.

"In the first place, take me to your magic circle, and let me see your fairy revels !" said the boy, boldly ; and even as he spoke, the trees which had hedged him in so closely, seemed to open out and melt away before him, and lo ! in a few moments he found himself transported to a lovely moonlit glade, in the centre of which rose a gently sloping green mound, studded with thousands of moving lamps, carried apparently by invisible hands. For a few moments his eyes were so dazzled by the brilliancy of the scene that he could discern nothing clearly, but as he drew nearer, and grew more accustomed to the changing panorama of light, he became aware of the fact, that beneath each of these lamps moved a tiny elf-like creature, perfect in form and limb, some of whom, resembling his little captive, were grotesque both in person and dress, whilst others were equally beautiful and attractive. And further he noted, that it was the brilliantly-coloured rays, emitted by the lamp or jewel with which each of these little creatures was furnished, that had produced so dazzling an effect on his senses.

Even now he found he could not look at them for long and keep his senses, but fell into a sort of trance, as he watched the rythmical movements of the fairies, who darted hither and thither with a snake-like rapidity of motion, and listened to the sound of strains of unearthly music, which seemed to fill the air with melody.

Suddenly, however, he was aroused by a series of sharp stabs on the hand, in which he held the elf captive, and turning quickly, he became aware of the fact that a dozen or more grotesque little figures, were creeping up his legs and arms, and dancing about on his shoulders, whilst two elves, bolder than the rest, had taken advantage of his pre-occupation, and were in the act of pricking his hand with their spears, in the hope they might take him by surprise and force him to release his prisoner. Another moment and they would have accomplished their purpose, but Joey, suddenly awake to his danger, tightened his grasp on the elf, and at the same time shook himself free of his tormenters, some of whom fell to the earth with violence, whilst others clung tightly to his garments, then letting themselves down gently, made their escape with all possible speed to a respectful distance, whence they stood grinning at the discomfiture of their imprisoned comrade, and watching with amusement the writhings and contortions by which he was evidently trying to propitiate his terrible master. But they did not grin long, for Joey, finding himself "master of the situation," could afford to be magnanimous, and after a sufficient show of anger and hesitation, granted a free pardon to little Red-cap, on condition he should make no further attempt to escape, and should moreover help him to turn the tables, and punish the tricky elves for their impertinence.

This, Red-cap was nothing loth to do. "If you will stay here a moment, sire, I will soon get you their caps ! So long as you keep these in your possession, they will be bound to do your bidding, or should you desire to inflict a more serious punishment, you will then only have to possess yourself of their lamps, without which they will be utterly powerless and miserable, since the lamp is to an elf what the sun is to a mortal, the source of life and light !" concluded little Red-cap, forgetting, in his anxiety to punish his scoffing comrades, that he was revealing the secret of his own weakness.

"Ha ! is it so ! Then, after them quickly ! and get me the precious lamps ! I will trouble you to hand me yours meanwhile. I will keep it safely for you till you return," said Joey, quick to take advantage of the slip, and unmoved by Red-cap's piteous pleadings for permission to retain his own light.

He thought it would be folly to trust the little man an inch out of his grasp unless he held some hostage for his return, so kept sternly to his resolve, though he could not but feel some pity for the shrivelled and woe-begone little creature who, shorn of his brightest ornament, crept reluctantly away to do his tyrant's bidding.

Left to himself, Joey stood staring curiously at the tiny lamp, which he held carefully between his thumb and first finger, surprised and alarmed to find how dull and colourless it looked when detached from its natural protector and bearer. The further little Red-cap went away in pursuit of the tricky elves, the duller grew the lamp, until at length there was only such a feeble flicker left, that the boy began to think it had arrived at its last expiring gasp. If this catastrophe should really happen, he would probably lose all further influence over the elf, a result he had by no means foreseen, in his anxiety to exert his newly acquired powers. Already his vision was getting very dim and uncertain, and he could no longer distinguish clearly the magic circle, whilst the sounds of the music grew fainter and fainter.

"Hi ! Red-cap, Red-cap, come back !" he shouted, lifting the lamp and waving his arms frantically in the direction the elf had taken.

(To be continued).

LITTLE ASKER'S PAGE.

ON ASKING QUESTIONS.

BY "DR. ABBOTT."

MR. WRIGHT has just been to see me here at "Solitude," and he says that the readers of *Young Days* would be glad if I would write a little paper for them. Indeed he offered to save me the trouble of writing, if I would only talk and let him take down what I said. But, busy as I am this winter with sick cases, I promised to put down something for you if I had to do it in my pocket-book, while riding in the gig from place to place. My pony, Dobbin, does not need much driving or guiding.

You may, or may not know that Mr. Wright told something about me in a book he wrote. One thing he said was, that it was I who gave the name, "LITTLE ASKER," to my boy, whose real name is Dennis Abbot. Well, I suppose Mr. Wright must be right. At any rate, he was right in that. I distinctly remember calling Dennis "Asker" for the first time, and we went on calling him "Little Asker" ever after.

Sometimes his questions were so numerous that Dobbin, harnessed and ready with the gig behind him, waiting at the door, would have had to stand all day wondering whatever in the name of horse-beans had become of me if I had stopped at the breakfast table to answer all "Asker's" queries.

But, still, however many, and however trying Dennis's questions may have been, since he began, I quite believe that "Asking Questions" is one of the best things boys and girls can do. And I will now proceed to show you how and why.

One of the greatest philosophers of ancient times was Socrates, the Greek. He was the humblest, hardiest, wisest man of his age. He was sentenced, at the age of seventy two, to die by drinking a cup of hemlock, for not believing in the gods of the Athenians. But Athens and the world afterwards found that their best man had thus been put to death.

How did Socrates attain his wisdom? By asking questions. He went about the streets and market-place of the city of Athens, chatting with anybody, wise or foolish, always asking to know something, for he modestly thought that he knew next to nothing.

And he did the Athenians great good by this. They had arrived at a period in their history when they regarded themselves as so smart, clever, and knowing. Socrates, by his simple art of asking questions, soon taught the Athenians that they did not know what they pretended to know; next he showed them that they did not really know anything; then he taught them what they ought to try to know. And he did all this by his habit of asking questions.

Now, no reader of *Young Days* will imagine that I am wanting to make him or her into a Socrates! My paper is written only to show that asking questions is a good thing, and I wish every one would learn the art of asking questions *well*!

For example: Ever since the days of the Garden of Eden, apples, I suppose, had been dropping off the world's apple trees if Eve and hungry schoolboys had not already plucked them! Apples had fallen from trees for thousands of years, until one day, about two hundred years ago, a man called Isaac Newton, noticed an apple drop of itself off a tree, and he at once asked:

"What made that apple drop?"

And he went on asking question after question in his own grand, humble mind, until he found out what is the mighty wondrous law that holds our earth, sun, moon, and stars all in their places, rolling forever round, like balloons that hang on nothing in space, yet never go wrong. That is to say, Isaac Newton discovered that whatever the mysterious power is by which the earth pulls a ripe apple down from the tree, it is just the same power, working in the same way, that keeps sun, moon, and stars from falling *away* from our globe.

When out riding in my gig through the country, and the weather becomes unsettled looking, I often think of Benjamin Franklin. Ben wanted to know whether the lightning in yonder black cloud was the same thing as electricity, and he made a kite of brown paper, tied an iron key to it, sent up the kite while he held the cord, and, although it was dangerous to do it, he soon made the discovery, he was really asking; his kite and key were his way of questioning the cloud, and the answer came.

Dean Stanley hardly ever went into a town that was fresh to him without asking himself why was the town called by this name.

But I must not give any more instances in this paper, else I could show you that one half the things we remember best, and nearly all the new sciences which great men find out, come by simply asking questions in all sorts of ways.

Why, when I call on one of my patients, and

say: "Put out your tongue," and when I take out my watch and put my thumb on the patient's wrist, am I not asking questions? By looking at the tongue I know how the stomach is, by feeling the pulse I know how the blood is.

I have one old lady as a patient who believes I can answer for her better than she can herself. If anybody asks her in the forenoon how she feels to-day, she says she can't tell, "the Doctor hasn't been yet!"

Just when I wrote that last sentence down, the gig I am riding in gave such a sudden jerk that my hat almost jolted over my eyes. It was Dobbin that did it. When I looked forward his tossing head seemed to be saying: "Come, come, Doctor, take hold of these reins; how long are you going to be writing for Young Days? do you think children like long papers?"

And so I must stop. Dobbin as good as says so. I'll tell Mr. Wright what the piece of advice was I wanted to finish with when——

"All right, Dobbin, I'm taking the reins, as soon as ever I can put my pencil and book in my pocket. Now, then, trot on?"

The advice Dr. Abbot was going to end with was: That we should all learn to ask questions, not for the mere sake of asking, not to seem smart; but really to get to know. And we should be careful not to trouble others too much with our questions, because really, if we would take the trouble, we could answer many of them ourselves.

He wanted me to tell you that when William Jones was a boy he used to ask questions of his mother. But she was wise enough not to tell him *all* he asked; she let him find things out for himself. She would sometimes say to him: "Read, my boy; read, and you will know."

And that sent him to books; and he learned to get to know by his own reading, until he made himself into the famous Sir William Jones, the greatest linguist of his day.

It was just that piece of advice Dr. Abbot wanted to end with:

"Read, read, and you will know!"

J. J. W.

But Dr. Abbot should have remembered that many readers of *Young Days* may not have the right books always, and may not know the right way to find in books explanations of things that puzzle them. And so we have our Little Asker's Corner open for their questions.

LITTLE ASKERS' CORNER.

Some questions have already come:

"C" has been reading in the Bible about a rib being taken from Adam. He wants to know "if boys and men have one rib short?"

I must ask "Dr. Abbot."

"M" wants to know "if more than one half the people in the world are bad?"

Mr. Wilson is likely to give me a wise answer.

All questions (see January Number) should be addressed to, or care of

Rev. J. J. Wright,
Bolton-le-Moors.

Look up and not down,
Look forward and not back,

Look out and not in, and
Lend a hand.

DO THE DUTY NEAREST.

BY LOUISE PHILLIPS.

Finding myself unfit for famous deeds,
I tried to help in people's lesser needs,
Just did the little tasks that lay at hand;
Picked up the fallen child, brushed off the sand;
Lightened my neighbour's load, dispelled the fears
From timid souls in galling bonds for years,
Sang just a little song that cheered some one
To whom the great songs were an unknown tongue,
And for my own made such a restful home
That they were tempted not from it to roam.
"Ah, me," I sighed, "this is not dreamed of name."
But, lo! my world was ringing with my fame.

THE WRECK.

BERNARD'S STORY.

I HAD never seen one before in all my life. Just fancy! I, Bernard King, had never set eyes on a wreck, though we had lived by the sea as long as I could remember. Of course if you choose to go and live at an awfully fashionable place like Breeton, you can't expect adventures to happen. With a flat coast too, like a table: and no cliffs or rocks except in the distance miles away. At any rate no ships of any size ever hugged *our* shores. The water was too shallow, until you got about a league outside; with no bays or inlets of any sort. And at last a real wreck lay opposite the town. And everybody went wild with excitement; Ted and I into the bargain.

There had been a collision further up the coast, as it happened. One ship, a small one, was supposed to have sunk with her crew, as they were never heard of again. The remainder had been rescued off "the Vandalia," (our Prize) and then the wind being high she had drifted on till she stuck in the sand about a hundred yards from shore.

Well, she didn't *look* like a wreck I must say. She stood upright as ever; and from land and in the position in which she was, nobody could catch sight of the huge hole that had been made almost right through her. "The Vandalia" carried thousands of Paraffin barrels; and these were hauled on to the sea wall and ranged along the green in fine style. And all the little white parties of low boats were going out to inspect the devastations, carrying eager visitors; so that the boatmen made a famous thing of it with their fares I can tell you.

Little Ted and I lived all alone with Aunt Kathie, in a nut shell of a house a quarter of a mile from Breeton on the Bendale road. Ted was only eight and small for his years, but the best fellow in the world, and he held on to me like wax. Years don't necessarily bring wisdom. I was four years older than Ted, but he was a thousand times better than I. If I had but listened to him once! Oh if I had! That would not have come to pass which did come to pass, that's all. And I should not have been forced to remember for ever the consequences of disobedience.

Our tutor, Mr. Green, was a good sort of fellow, but ever so much too strict, in *my* opinion. He treated us like girls and was always correcting and saying, "You mustn't do this, and you musn't do that." "Do what your Aunt wishes, Bernard, and set aside your own." That was all very fine, I used to think. Had *he* acted out his own theory when he was a boy? For if so, he seemed quite emancipated from the thraldom now. Green was tall and thin, and great at sports of all kinds—not half bad in his way after all.

We thought and talked a lot about this Wreck, you may be sure, Ted and I. Pretty nearly every spare moment we spent on the sea wall or down by the water's edge, staring through opera glasses at "The Vandalia," and watching the endless cargo come ashore. How we envied those tow boats that were constantly spinning out to her, you may imagine! At least *I* envied them; for then I was wild to be a sailor myself, and anything connected with the sea had an indescribable fascination for me. That was a fever which soon passed off; but at that period it was in my thoughts day and night, and I was longing with my whole heart to go over the Wreck. Unfortunately Aunt Kath was so awfully timid of the water! Well you see, her husband and one of her brothers had been drowned by the upsetting of a pleasure boat many years back. That brother was Ted's and my father. And although he was not a sailor and perhaps might have been living now if he had been, still considering, one did not so much wonder at her being afraid of our going on the sea, alone, that is. We could be trusted with Green anywhere, from a pond to a precipice; but alone we were distinctly forbidden to do any boating whatsoever. And I must confess, it seemed hard.

I loved Aunt Kath dearly, and would not have hurt a hair of her head for the world, but notwithstanding I believed *then* that it was the grandest thing possible to get your own way! I know now it is often a poor mean thing enough, and that the real grandeur may consist in just giving it up. The Divine example of self-denial, obedience, had no beauty in my eyes as yet, that I should desire it.

At luncheon one day, I summoned up courage and asked if we boys and Mr. Green might go out and see "the Vandalia" that afternoon. "We must be quick if we are to see it at all Aunt Kath; for old Ben at the Coastguard Station says that now her cargo is all unloaded she may be towed away any day into Portsmouth Docks and be patched up again for sea. We may go to-day, may'nt we? There's a jolly old Auntie! Ted and I have been waiting ever so long!" I looked at her appealingly. She could not help smiling at my eagerness and Ted's wide open eyes of delight and expectation.

"I don't know about this afternoon, boys—That must depend on whether it will be convenient to your tutor or not. But I have no objection, as long as he is able to take care of you. I am sure I can trust you not to attempt the expedition by yourselves."

Something in that speech made me wince somehow. "*Can* we, sir?" and I turned imploringly to where our tutor sat bolt upright at the bottom of the table, carving away in his usual deliberate manner. "You know you will be out all to-morrow at Eastbourne, and this is a half holiday afternoon."

"Yes, Bernard, I shall be unavoidably absent for the whole of Thursday, and I regret that I have an engagement for cricket at three o'clock this afternoon, so that we must put off the expedition until a more favourable opportunity occurs."

"Why she may be gone almost any moment now!" I cried, writhing on my chair with vexation; "Most likely we shan't get another opportunity, sir! Aunt Kath, couldn't you let Ted and me just for once go by ourselves? We could have old Ben! He said he would take us in "The Nancy" any time we liked. You are not afraid of him, are you?"

But there! Not a word would she hear of it? Aunt Kath was as firm as a rock. We were to go with Green, or not at all; and as he hurried off for the cricket match, he promised that the day but one afterwards, if nothing prevented, we would certainly see "the Vandalia" together.

You may fancy how sweet I felt! I said nothing, however, till Ted and I were alone, and Aunt Kath had gone to lie down in her own room.

"What a bother!" I exclaimed angrily; "Wait old Green's convenience, indeed! A pretty thing!"

"Oh, never mind, Bern.e. Let s go and search for fossils in the chalk pits and use my new hammer."

"No, Ted! We'll have a *look* at 'the Vandalia,' if it is only to see her towed away to Portsmouth." I growled, gloomily; dragging him out of the room as I spoke. (We were free to do as we choose, for the most part, on a half holiday.)

"Better not!" Ted said, soberly, a quaint expression in his merry, blue eyes.

"Why not, lad? Do you suppose Ben will carry us off bodily to sea if we do? Don't be a girl, Ted! Well, then, scour after your precious fossils by yourself, and hammer all your fingers as you did last time. *I'm* not coming!"

Of course Ted gave in. We ran in couples for everything, and each knew very well that the one had a poor chance for fun anywhere without the other.

"Don't be cross, old fellow!" linking his arm affectionately in mine; "we'll leave the chalk pit. It will do next half holiday all right. I don't care. Only what's the use of grumping after what we can't have?"

That was Ted all over! "No use crying over spilt milk," had been his motto from babyhood. I generally put his young philosophy down to his cherry, contented spirit. But I believe after all that *Duty* was his first thought; child as Ted then was. More shame for me that I did not help him on in the right path as an elder brother ought to have done.

So we sauntered along in the direction of the sea wall. I put out, and dissatisfied; he a little quieter than usual, for in his way Ted yearned for forbidden fruit as much as I did. That April afternoon was perfect! The sky was dazzlingly blue, flecked with the softest clouds; and the sea lay like a great sapphire lake rippling gently to and fro. It was low tide, and "the Vandalia" was lifted so high out of the water that we could see nearly the whole of her black hull, though not the fatal gash in her side. For as I remarked before, that was not visible from shore. Her masts had been cut down a little, in order to lessen the weight of removal, therefore, she did not appear so absolutely queenly as at first; but in my enthusiastic opinion she was still as gallant and graceful a freight as ever anybody could wish to behold. And I simply felt mad to be on board. A lot of figures were moving about her, in the rigging and on deck; and a bustle going on generally.

As we clambered across the beach, picking our steps among countless barrels, broken bits of spar and rubbish of all sorts, a gruff voice hailed us suddenly, and there was old Ben, the Coastguardsman, standing up in his little cockleshell of a boat "The Nancy;" half on the wet sand, half in the shallow water. He had his glasses, and had sighted us in a moment.

"Hollo! Ben is out there. He wants us, Ted! Come along!" I caught his hand, and we flew over the shining stretch of sand to the water's edge. Didn't I guess what that hail of his meant? Yes, I intended to avail myself of its meaning too. "You'd like to go out, young masters, wouldn't you?" he said; touching his cap respectfully; "I see'd you in the distance, and thinks I, here's a chance for 'em. I'll take you to 'The Vandalia' yonder, and won't charge

you nothing neither. She is to be towed off for certain at high tide in the morning."

"When will it be high tide?" I asked, breathlessly; "Four o'clock sharp, Master Bernard. Now's your time! You'll not have a second opportunity as good as this."

"We'll go, Ben! Jump in, Teddy boy." I was determined to accept his invitation at all costs. Every scruple had been thrown to the winds; yet I was equally determined that I would not transgress alone. I shall never forget the glance Ted gave. "Bernard! We are forbidden! Ain't you afraid?"

"Afraid? Not I. Nor you either, I fancy." (I refused to understand his real feeling in the matter; a fear of wrongdoing, because it would be sin against *God.*) "I say, Teddy, you're not going to let me get into a scrape and sneak out yourself, are you?" Ah! That told. It was a cowardly thing to say; for it was about the one motive that could influence my faithful little brother. He would have stood out alone against tremendous odds, but the leaving me to run into temptation singly was more than he was able to bear. Right or wrong, he must go also, and share the glory and shame with me. Ben, busy with some of the boat tackle did not hear the short colloquy. Ted's face grew very pale, but he stepped into "The Nancy" after me; far more miserable than I was happy, I am convinced, as Ben moved off.

A few vigorous strokes brought us to the side of "The Vandalia." I talked rapidly all the way, excited and well nigh trembling with eagerness. Ted was quite silent, and I knew, awfully unhappy; but I did not stop to think of that.

I climbed up the ship's side in a jiffy, and turned to help young Fred. To this day, I can't tell whether it was because there was something like tears in his eyes and he couldn't see properly, or if "The Vandalia" gave a lurch just as he was half-way up the companion ladder,—anyhow, Ted missed his footing, and fell heavily into the water, striking the boat in his fall. There! The horror of that instant, when I saw him disappear under the waves, and thought he might be drowned through my wicked disobedience—I shall remember to my dying hour.

Everything swam before me for a moment, the next Ben had caught Ted and laid him white and motionless as death, on the cushions of the boat, and was chafing his limp hands and calling him all the tender names he could think of. But it seemed to me, as we turned back without even a thought of what we had come to see, that I should but be punished deservedly if my only brother, who was all the world to my rough heart, should never wake again but in Heaven.

* * * * * *

"Bernard!" "Yes, dear, dear old chap! I'm here." "Oh, Bernie, I've been very ill, haven't I?"

It was the first time he had spoken connectedly for days. He was a delicate child to begin with, and fever had set in after his wetting, partly from the shock of the immersion, the doctor said, and partly he feared from some injury to the spine, the extent of which he was not yet able to discover. Ah! not once nor twice, he had nearly slipped away from us; and now Ted was conscious once more! and tears were streaming down my face as if I had been a veritablebaby!

"Why Bennie! you're crying!" with a weak laugh of his own; "Tell me, has 'the Vandalia' gone yet?"

"Long ago, Teddie."

"Oh!" with a shudder; "Do you know all this time I've believed she had sunk to the bottom of the sea and taken me with her. I thought I was lost. It was dreadful! And Bernard, I'm going to tell Aunt Kath that I'll never do wrong again, even if it does mean deserting you! You won't mind, will you? Oh, my back!" heaving a weary sigh; "It does feel queer!"

It is months and months since that accident happened, and young Ted still has to spend more than half his days on the sofa. I felt, to begin with, that I never should be happy again (though it is confidently hoped now that the old chap's recovery if awfully slow, is just as sure), but you can't think how jolly and forgiving and all the rest of it Aunt Kath and Green were throughout! It nearly broke a fellow down altogether, and has helped me as much as anything else I verily believe, to learn the difficult lesson of obedience.

FLORENCE UPTON.

WILL winter never be over?
  Will the dark days never go?
Must the buttercup and the clover
  Be always hid under the snow?

Ah, lend me your little ear, love!
  Hark! 'tis a beautiful thing;
The weariest month of the year, love,
  Is shortest and nearest the spring!

Selected.

THE WELL OF LIFE.

THERE is an old Persian legend, found in a book called "Lights of Canopus," which tells why King Solomon, or, as he is there called, the Sultan Suleiman, refused to drink of the water from the Well of Life, which was said to have been sent to him by God. The story tells us how great a man Suleiman was: Angels, and Djins and Peris* paid him homage, as well as men and beasts and birds. Eagles flew between him and the sun to shade him; bears brought him wild honey to eat; snakes brought him their jewels to wear; even flowers sprang up to make a footstool for his feet. He was so powerful that everywhere, on the earth, in the sea, in the sky, even in the lower world all things obeyed him. One day, as he was seated on some mountain top, surrounded by his court, and by numerous beasts and birds, who in those days were gifted with the power of human speech, a cloud came slowly along which gradually seemed to assume human shape, though no face was visible. Presently a hand appeared from the cloud, holding a cup made of a ruby, and a voice was heard, saying "Drink this liquor up! Drink, dread King! It is the will of God that I should bring thee water from the Well of Life. To thee alone, O Suleiman! God proffers this draught, which, if thou drinkest, will make thy flesh and blood like an angel's, and give thee comely, never-changing youth. Thy days shall never end; thou shalt have such delights that immortal years shall seem as nothing; thou shalt have such wisdom, and knowledge of truth as thou hast longed for. Make thy choice; drink it or spill it. My task is done." So saying, the the cloud or form vanished, and nothing remained save the ruby cup, left in Suleiman's hand.

Then he mused to himself much in this wise. "Doubtless it would be good to drink this gift of God; for then I should be able to make up for much mis-spent time, to retread the path of life a wiser man than when I set out along it. It would be good to be able to be ever youthful; to preserve my kingdom, to find out truth with my whole energies, undimmed by the pursuit. Good too that I should be enabled to bring the Temple, which has been so long building, to perfection: good too to secure peace for my people, to see my kingdom grow, and to see my name resplendent on the page of history. Yes, I will drink! But first let me hear what my counsellors have to say." Then they all shouted "Drink, happy King!" Still, he wanted each to give his counsel, so he asked them in turn. Then Sakhrah, the Dev, spoke. He reminded Suleiman that the gold of youth is bright, and dull the silver of slow-creeping age. Dear, too, are wealth and power, and the pleasures of the company of lovely women. Then Shîr, the Djin, gave his opinion, which was that the Sultan should drink it, for it were not well that his throne should be vacant, and the good of the earth rested on his continuing to reign. Amberîn the Peri also counselled the king to drink, for in him alone rested the joys of men and Devs. Assad, the Lion, on the part of the beasts; Sag, the Seal, speaking for the inhabitants of the waters; Baikal, the Locust, on behalf of "all things which burrow, creep, and buzz;" Hudhud, the Lapwing, all urged him to drink. Then Suleiman asked "Is there no other counsel? Has everyone spoken?" Then the hill-fox asked whether he wanted to hear the advice of Kûmri, the Dove? If so, he must send for her, for she was stopping at home on her nest among the thorns. Suleiman bade her be fetched, and straight away

> "Came Kumri, flying from her tree; the Dove
> Who hath the neck of purple, and the wings
> Of silver, and the breast filled full of love:
> Heaven's softest creature."

First craving pardon for having stayed to "brood twin eggs which must not chill," she asked what the king was doing with the Ruby cup. Suleiman told her that it contained a draught of which, should he drink, he would never die. Then Kûmri sighed. What was she, "a little bird, which only knows to nest and brood, and

* These in the Persian mythology were Fairies, Elfs, and the like.

coo," that she should give advice to the great Suleiman? "But," asked she, "has He who gave thee this water, given too this other boon, that those whom thou lovest, thy queen, thy children, thy friends, should also take their share of the wondrous draught?" "Nay," replied Suleiman, "the cup, not bigger than those eggs thou left just now, is for me alone. I am, if I will, to drain it to the last drop."

"Alas!" said Kûmri, "how could they counsel thee to drink? for all will perish, thy queens, thy loved ones, all will be like last year's snow on the hot mountains. Thou wilt rule, 'tis true, but it will be among graves; thou wilt see thy loved ones, whose lips were once pressed to thine, die. In thy splendour thou wilt be sad, thy loneliness will be worse than that of the deserts or the sea. The earth will grow old and grey; thy kingdoms will pass away; thy fields grow wild again. Thou ever young, with memory only old, wilt taste death in the dust from the tomb, death in the flowers, death in the mid-day light, death everywhere. Forgive me, my Lord. It is love that bids me speak. The wild dove dies if her mate returneth not. I would not drink of this draught, though I am so weak, lest I should lose more more than I gained: Love is wise!"

So saying, Kûmri flew away back to her eggs, and Suleiman dashed the cup to the ground, for he knew the words of Kûmri were full of wisdom as they were full of love. A living poet, Sir Edwin Arnold, has made a beautiful poem of this story. It is to be found in a volume of other beautiful poems, called "Lotus and Jewel."

R. B.

A TRUE GENTLEMAN.

OF Sir Moses Montefiore's courtesy and geniality many anecdotes are related. Coming up to town in his reserved saloon in the Ramsgate train, he would frequently offer a seat to strangers whom he saw incommoded by the pressure of tourists, and sometimes in London send them home in his own carriage, walking or taking a cab himself. A barrister having sent a clerk to him with a letter after office hours, the baronet asked the boy to read to him, and being pleased with his elocution, kept him to dinner, and gave him a copy of "Shakespeare." Of young folks he has always been fond: and he possessed the rare faculty of engaging their confidence, and making them at home. Not very long before his death he appeared at a charity bazaar, and bought a great quantity of toys and trinkets, which he continuously gave away to the hungry-eyed youngsters who crowded round him. An instance of his thoughtfulness is related by the late Mr. Sidney Samuel, in his "Jewish Life in the East." Describing his visit to Jaffa, Mr. Samuel says: I heard from my estimable and hospitable host of one of those acts of politeness and kindly courtesy on the part of Sir Moses Montefiore which contribute so much to endear the name of one who so worthily upholds the dignity of Judaism to all who have the good fortune to know him. Residing for thirteen days in the house of my host, on the occasion of his recent visit to the Holy Land, he noticed that the daughter of the house, who had presented him with a beautifully-embroidered phylacteries-bag, was a musician. Not content with sending the father a valuable gift, he gave the young lady a handsome piano, and a box of musical publications, which derive additional value from the fact of their having belonged to the late Lady Montefiore."

WHEN I WAS A GIRL.

"When I was a girl," said grandmamma,
Who stooped with her weight of years,
"My step was as light as your steps are,
My form was as straight, my dears!
With laughter and song my youth was gay;
I had more bright days than sad.
And so, little maids, to you I say,
And bear it in mind—Be Glad!"

"When I was a girl"—she sweetly smiled
On each fair young face upturned—
"I kept the love and faith of a child,
And in all things God discerned!
His constant blessing my spirit knew,
His guidance I understood;
And so, my children, I say to you,
And lay it to heart—Be Good!"

TEACHER of the geography class: "Which is the coldest river?" Smart boy: "The ice is" (Isis). Teacher: "No, there's one colder, the icer" (Iser). The smart boy looks beaten.